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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to explore the relationship between the interpersonal behavior of community college department chairs and the assessment of their leadership effectiveness by department faculty. The study population consisted of 30 humanities and social science chairs at 15 Mississippi community colleges, as well as 171 faculty members at the colleges. Element B from W. C. Schutz's Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO) was administered to the chairs to assess their interpersonal need orientation, while the Departmental Evaluation of Chairperson Activities for Development (DECAD) questionnaire was administered to the faculty members to determine their perceptions of chair effectiveness. Study results included the following: (1) in faculty ratings, 64.2% of the chairs were categorized as effective and 35.7% as ineffective; (2) there were no significant differences between effective and ineffective deans with respect to expressed inclusion, expressed control, received control, expressed openness, and received openness; and (3) significant differences were found, however, for the variables of perceived inclusion and wanted inclusion, with effective deans showing a need to maintain and establish interaction with others. Recommendations for policy changes and further research are included. Contains 16 references. (HAA)

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FIRO B: ANALYZING COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEPARTMENT CHAIRS' EFFECTIVENESS

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Abstract

This research study was designed to explore the relationship between community college department/division chairpersons' interpersonal behavior and their perceived leadership effectiveness. The Departmental Evaluation of Chairperson Activities for Development (DECAD) system was used to determine the department chairpersons' administrative effectiveness, and Element B was used to assess the chairperson's interpersonal behavioral characteristics. There were significant differences in the dependent variables of received inclusion, perceived inclusion, and wanted inclusion interpersonal behaviors between the ineffective and the effective chairs.

FIRO B: ANALYZING COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEPARTMENT CHAIRS' EFFECTIVENESS

Introduction

Effective leadership involves getting people to work together to reach a common goal. It involves the sharing of a vision, strategy, trust, and the development of cooperation and high motivation, which result in productivity (Rosenbach & Taylor, 1989). Before leaders can understand their followers, they must first understand themselves. The understanding of self enables leaders to understand others. Leaders must be aware of their values, attitudes, personal preferences, and their cognitive ability to gather, evaluate, and respond to the information that they receive. Since leadership involves constant interaction with people, leaders must be aware of their behavior around other people (Whetten & Cameron, 1984) and must maintain a satisfactory interpersonal relationship with their subordinates. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between interpersonal behavior and the perceived leadership effectiveness of selected academic department/division chairs of community colleges in Mississippi.

Bennis (1989a) outlines several basic ingredients of leadership. One of these ingredients is self-awareness. He believes that before you can succeed, you must have a thorough understanding of who you are--your strengths, your weaknesses, your goals, and your reasons for wanting to achieve these goals. As a result of studying 90 proven successful leaders

(60 corporate executives, most of whom were from Fortune 500 companies, and 30 leaders from the public sector), Bennis (1993) identified four competencies of leadership: management of attention, management of meaning, management of trust, and management of self. During this study, he observed that leaders who managed attention possessed the ability to attract others to them. These leaders were able to share their unique focus of commitment with their followers, and they had a vision. Bennis' management of attention emphasizes the importance of leaders possessing effective interpersonal skills.

If leaders have personalities that are not conducive to constant interchange with people, this may be a cause of their ineffectiveness as leaders. In his book, Why Leaders Can't Lead, Bennis (1989b) discussed the perceived deterioration of leadership. He believes that among other things, society is partly responsible for the present decline in leadership. On a positive note, however, he thinks that America is better able to solve the problem of leadership today than it was decades ago because America recognizes the problem. Thus, it is important for leaders to know their interpersonal orientation or behavioral tendencies in order for them to respond in a manner that will lead to success for the organization.

Problem

According to Eddy (1990), the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges and many universities are displaying considerable interest in leadership training for community college executives. Eddy (1990) writes:

> We need to find ways not only to enhance the current leadership at our colleges but to foster strong and informed administrators at the mid-level, who are ready to play leadership roles in their current positions and to move into positions with greater responsibilities. (p. 2)

Also in support of leadership development of community college personnel, the 1990 Public Policy Agenda of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges identified leadership development as a priority.

Leadership concerns are important to community colleges because the community college services a diverse and large segment of the American population who are interested in educational and vocational advancement. Unlike many other institutions of higher education, the community college clientele includes blue collar workers and their children, minorities, and non-traditional students (Vaughn & Associates, 1992).

Bryant (1992) related this national interest in improving community college leadership to the leadership problems faced by community colleges. Bryant identified two problems. First, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, 40% of current

community college administrators and faculty will retire. Secondly, a nationwide survey by the Carnegie Foundation indicated that "over 60 percent of community college faculty rated their administrators fair or poor, and 66 percent said the administrator at their institution is autocratic" (Bryant, 1992, p. 41). Further, Gmelch (1991) noted that there are approximately 80,000 department chairs and one-fourth will need to be replaced yearly. He contended that these chairs ". . . come to the position without leadership training; without prior administrative experience; without a clear understanding of the ambiguity and complexity of their role. . ." (p. 45). Therefore, a study examining the effectiveness of department chairpersons is necessary.

Methods and Procedures

The causal comparative research design was used in this study. This study focused on the interpersonal behaviors of effective and ineffective department chairpersons at community colleges within the State of Mississippi. Included in this study were department chairs from 15 of the 17 community/junior colleges, public and private in this state. The mail questionnaire was used as the data gathering method. The Element B questionnaire (Schutz, 1992) was used to identify the interpersonal need orientation of department chairs surveyed while the DECAD (Center for Faculty Evaluation and Development, 1991) was used to assess the chairpersons' effectiveness as

leaders. Descriptive statistics and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) were used to analyze the data.

Instrumentation

Two validated instruments were used to collect data in this study. First, Element B developed by Will Schutz (1987) was utilized to measure interpersonal need orientation. Secondly, the Departmental Evaluation of Chairperson Activities for Development (DECAD) survey instrument developed by Hoyt and copyrighted by the Center for Faculty Evaluation and Development (1991) at Kansas State University was used to measure the department/division chairperson effectiveness.

Population

The subjects in this study were department/division chairpersons and faculty members. These subjects came from two-year or community colleges that offer associate degrees. These colleges are located in the State of Mississippi. There is a total of 17 community colleges, excluding proprietary schools, in this state. Of this total number, 15 (88%) of the 17 community colleges consented to participate in this study. From this population, each department or division that taught humanities and social science courses was surveyed. Specifically, the participants in this study consisted of department/division chairpersons and faculty from 15 community colleges who are associated with the humanities and social science departments or divisions.

The population consisted of 30 (93% response rate)

department/division chairpersons from the divisions of humanities and social sciences. These divisions were selected because the persons working in these academic areas come in contact with all or the majority of the community college students and because these are usually the largest divisions on campus. The faculty from these 15 community colleges in these two divisions consisted of 259 persons. Of this number 171 (66% response rate) responded. Borg and Gall (1989) contended that an adequate response rate for mail questionnaires range from 42% - 77%. Extra efforts with follow-up phone calls and letters were made to ensure that at least 50% of the participating faculty from each college responded. Because two chairpersons did not respond, the faculty ratings of these chairs were not used in the analyses of data.

Results

The first step in the data gathering process was to assess the administrative effectiveness of the community college department/division chairpersons. To achieve this purpose, the DECAD instrument was mailed to 256 full-time faculty within the department/division of humanities and social science at 15 community colleges throughout the State of Mississippi. The department/division chairperson's effectiveness was determined by the faculty perception of their respective chairperson's performance on 15 administrative responsibilities. From the results of the DECAD, 10 or 35.7% of the chairpersons were categorized as ineffective and 18 or 64.2% of the chairpersons

were categorized as effective. The mean score for ineffective chairpersons was M = 3.15 and for effective chairpersons M = 4.10.

Two major research questions were used to guide the focus of this investigation.

> Research question 1: Is there a significant difference between the expressed and received interpersonal behavioral characteristics of inclusion, control, and openness of department/division chairpersons who are perceived as maintaining a high degree of administrative effectiveness as compared to those maintaining a low degree of administrative effectiveness as measured by the DECAD instrument?

To analyze this research question, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was computed in which the expressed and received behavioral characteristics of inclusion, control, and openness were dependent variables and ineffective and effective department/division chairs were independent variables. These results are found in Table 1.

There were no significant differences in the dependent variables of expressed inclusion, $F(1, 26) = .063$, $p > .05$; expressed control, $F(1, 26) = .469$, $p > .05$; received control, $F(1, 26) = .708$, $p > .05$; express openness, $F(1, 26) = .453$, $p > .05$; and received openness, $F(1, 26) = .890$, $p > .05$; between the two groups of department/division chairs. There was significant difference in the dependent variable of received

inclusion, $F(1, 26) = .013$, $p < .05$ between the two groups. The significance of this variable indicates that there is a significant difference in the received inclusion interpersonal behavioral characteristic of ineffective and effective department/division chairpersons.

Insert Table 1 about here

Since a significant difference was found with the dependent variable of received inclusion, an independent t-test was computed. Table 2 displays the results of this t-test. A significance difference was found in the received inclusion variable of chairpersons' effectiveness, $t(-2.67) = .013$, $p < .05$.

Insert Table 2 about here

The second research question also focused on the interpersonal behaviors of department/division chairpersons.

Research question 2: Is there a significant difference between the perceived and wanted interpersonal behavioral characteristics of inclusion, control, and openness of department/division chairpersons who are perceived as maintaining a high degree of administrative effectiveness as compared to those who are perceived as maintaining a low

degree of administrative effectiveness as measured by the DECAD instrument?

To investigate the answer to this question, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was computed in which the perceived and wanted behavioral characteristics of inclusion, control, and openness were dependent variables and ineffective and effective department/division chairpersons were independent variables. The results of the MANOVA (see Table 3) indicated that two variables were significant. Significant differences were found for the variables of perceived inclusion $F(1, 26) = .028$, $p < .05$; and wanted inclusion, $F(1, 26) = .032$, $p < .05$. No significant differences were found for perceived control, $F(1, 26) = .510$, $p > .05$; wanted control $F(1, 26) = .540$, $p > .05$; perceived openness, $F(1, 26) = .789$, $p > .05$; and wanted openness, $F(1, 26) = .606$, $p > .05$.

Insert Table 3 about here

Independent t-tests (see Table 4) were computed for the significant variables of perceived inclusion and wanted inclusion. The results of these t-tests indicate that there are significant differences in the variables of perceived inclusion between the two groups of chairs, t (-2.33) = .028, $p < .05$, and wanted inclusion t (-2.26) = .032, $p < .05$.

Insert Table 4 about here

Summary of Findings

The results of the analyses of data using MANOVA indicated significant differences for the variables of received inclusion, perceived inclusion, and wanted inclusion. Independent t-tests were used as post hoc procedures and also revealed significant differences for these variables. Although not significant at the alpha level of .05, a meaningful difference was found for the expressed inclusion variable. No significant differences were found for any of the control and openness variables.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Using Schutz's three dimensions of interpersonal behavior, this study explored the relationship between effective leadership and the degree to which department chairpersons communicate with others. The findings of this study seem to indicate that effective department chairs, in the colleges included in this study, are those who have a need to maintain and establish interaction with others. The results further suggest that these effective leaders are those who are included by others, that is, others include them in their interactions and associations. These effective leaders are those who perceived themselves as associating with others. These findings further suggest that effective chairpersons are those who want to be included by

others. Although the statistical results did not indicate a significant difference for the expressed inclusion behavior [($F(1, 26) = .063$, $p > .05$), which is not that much greater than the alpha level and is far less than the F significance of expressed and received dimensions of control and openness], it can be argued that the difference (.063) is meaningful. This meaningful difference seems to suggest that effective chairs are those who initiate interactions with other people.

Researchers have suggested, regardless of the profession, that one of the most ineffective types of leadership behavior is the autocratic or authoritarian style of leadership (Deal, 1990; Etzioni, 1988; Sergiovanni, 1990 in Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1991). These same researchers have told us that one of the most ineffective types of power is coercive power. People do not like to be controlled. People do not like to be told what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. The findings of this study indicated that control was not a determinant variable in leadership effectiveness. These findings appear to be consistent with current teachings in the field of leadership which encourage the employee-centered approach to leadership (Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1973; Blake & Mouton, 1985; Hersey & Blanchard, 1988 in Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1991). Further, Schutz defines openness as a person's need to share thoughts and innermost feelings (1992). It would appear that such behavior, the sharing of these types of thoughts and feelings, has no place in the work environment. Although communication specialists advocate self-disclosure as a means of

understanding the self and establishing interpersonal relationships, the disclosure of the self in an organizational setting should be related to the professional aspects of the self (Brooks & Heath, 1989).

The findings of this study suggest that effective chairpersons are those who establish and maintain interactions with others. These findings appear to be consistent with the advocates of participative leadership and the team management concept. Since most department chairpersons were once faculty members who, for the most part, worked alone preparing lectures and conducting research, the significance of the inclusion dimension of interpersonal behavior for effective department/division chairpersons might indicate that training or orientation programs for department/division chairs would be a beneficial addition to such programs. In addition to including the inclusion interpersonal behavioral dimension as a part of training programs for chairpersons, it might be useful to encourage chairpersons to strive to converse with faculty members on issues of importance to the department/division and to encourage faculty to associate with each other through team teaching, team research and grant writing, and participating in extra curricular activities. The chairperson should strive to exhibit interactive and associative behaviors with faculty and other staff members that promote academic and administrative excellence.

These results have implications for higher education department/division chairs. These chairs may want to examine their interpersonal behavior in the area of inclusion. The significant difference in the need to establish and maintain interaction with others for ineffective and effective department/division chairs seem to suggest that those chairs who exhibit the need to and who want to be included and feel that they are included by others are effective chairpersons.

Recommendations for Policy Changes and Further Research

The findings of this study may serve as a basis upon which policies regarding the selection process and training programs for department chairpersons may be enhanced. In many community colleges, an academician's competence and ability to perform as an administrator are often measured by the length of employment in higher education and the highest degree achieved. The results of this study suggest that interpersonal behavior should be included as a factor in selecting these academic administrators. Also, the training programs for academic leaders should include some type of voluntary interpersonal assessment (e.g., Element B) in addition to the personality assessments that are currently used. The use of Element B for this purpose would allow administrators to examine their interpersonal behaviors toward their followers and the interpersonal behavior they want to receive from these followers. This type of interpersonal assessment would allow the administrators the opportunity to improve less desirable interpersonal behaviors.

In addition, the following recommendations for research are suggested to encourage exploration of the relationship between interpersonal behavior and administrative effectiveness:

1. Replicate this study using different instruments to measure interpersonal behavior and department/division chairpersons' effectiveness;
2. Replicate this study using the same instrument with a different population, perhaps a national survey of community college department chairpersons;
3. Conduct a study that examines the relationship between interpersonal behavior and teacher effectiveness;
4. Conduct a similar study that examines the relationship between the interpersonal behavior of effective and ineffective department chairpersons relative to age, gender, and length of employment;
5. Conduct a study that focuses on the roles and responsibilities of community college department chairpersons;
6. Conduct a longitudinal study where the department chairs are made aware of their perceived administrative effectiveness and then conduct pre and post interpersonal behavioral assessments to determine if there are meaningful changes in their interpersonal behavior over a period of time;

7. Conduct a study using Element B to assess the effectiveness of elementary and secondary school principals; and
8. Conduct a study to examine the relationship between department chairpersons' effectiveness and the method of selection to the position.

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Table 1

One-way MANOVA for Expressed and Received Inclusion, Control, and Openness

Effect: Effectiveness

Multivariate test of significance (S = 1, M = 2, N = 9 1/2)

Test Name	Value	Exact F	Hypoth. DF	Error DF	Sig. of F
Wilks	.690	1.56	6.00	21.00	.205

Univariate F-tests with (1, 26) D.F.

Variable	Hypothesis SS	Error SS	Hypothesis MS	Error MS	F	Sig. of F
Expressed Inclusion	44.57	308.10	44.57	11.85	3.76	.063
Received Inclusion	160.71	586.00	160.71	22.53	7.13	.013*
Expressed Control	10.86	524.10	10.86	20.15	.53	.469
Received Control	2.85	519.00	2.85	19.96	.14	.708
Expressed Openness	7.01	313.84	7.01	12.07	.58	.453
Received Openness	.25	345.60	.25	13.29	.01	.890

*$p < .05$

Table 2

Independent t-Test for Variable Received Inclusion

	Ineffective		Effective			
Variable	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	df	*t*
Received Inclusion	8.00	5.43	13.00	4.33	26	.013*

*$p < .05$

Table 3

One-way MANOVA for Perceived and Wanted Inclusion, Control, and Openness

Effect: Effectiveness

Multivariate test of significance (S = 1, M = 2, N = 9 1/2)

Test Name	Value	Exact F	Hypoth. DF	Error DF	Sig. of F
Wilks	.750	1.16	6.00	21.00	.361

Univariate F-tests with (1, 26) D.F.

Variable	Hypothesis SS	Error SS	Hypothesis MS	Error MS	F	Sig. of F
Perceived Inclusion	80.76	385.34	80.76	14.82	5.44	.028*
Wanted Inclusion	104.57	530.10	104.57	20.38	5.12	.032*
Perceived Control	5.20	320.90	5.20	11.65	.44	.510
Wanted Control	7.31	493.40	7.31	18.97	.38	.540
Perceived Openness	.86	306.10	.86	11.77	.07	.789
Wanted Openness	3.25	310.17	3.25	11.92	.27	.606

*$p < .05$

Table 4

Independent t-Tests for Variables Perceived Inclusion and Wanted Inclusion

	Ineffective		Effective			
Variable	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	df	*t*
Perceived Inclusion	8.40	3.74	11.94	3.90	26	.028*
Wanted Inclusion	8.80	4.91	12.83	4.28	26	.032*

*$p < .05$